



Above: The new DWFPD volunteers are, from left, Cory Trottier, Melissa Seidenberg, Rachael Peters, Zack Parker, Stefanie Metcalf, George Laugesen, Andrew Kopp, and Gage Froedje. *Photo by Jennifer Kaylor*

because the district is shrinking due to Colorado Springs annexing a large part of the district.

Ridings stated that calls include incidents such as traffic accidents and other emergencies. In response to a question posed by Rusnak during the opening public comments, Ridings confirmed that the report encompassed only those calls in the remaining portion of the district. The August and September breakdown of mutual aid included 16 and nine calls in which Wescott provided aid, and four and two times in which Wescott received aid, respectively. Average response times

were 5 minutes and 44 seconds in August and 5 minutes and 39 seconds in September.

Ridings reported that the wild-fire risk reduction grant received for the south side of High Forest Ranch's shaded fuel-break project, which included the northern portion of Shamrock Ranch, had been completed. (A shaded fuel break is a wide and easily accessible strip of land in which trees and brush are reduced to improve fire control opportunities.) The 50/50 matching grant provided \$57,720, and the remainder of the \$115,000 total cost was covered by the respective property

owners. The project treated 82 acres at a mitigation cost of \$1,400 per acre, enhanced 30 homes with defensible space, and treated roughly 300 acres of adjacent lands.

Burns announced that the deployment in Oregon was completed and, although California still needed help, DWFPD had not been called to assist.

Election will determine budget

Burns commented that "all boxes have been checked" with regard to the Nov. 7 election. Because the district's taxpayers will vote to approve or deny an increase from 7 mills to 21.9 mills, Burns stated that he would present a budget

once the election was final. Gent suggested that the board may need to schedule an additional meeting due to the postponed budget process.

The meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

The next DWFPD Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 21, at 7 p.m. at Station 1, 15415 Gleneagle Drive. Please call (719) 488-8680, a nonemergency number, for more information, or visit www.wescottfire.org. The district is also on Facebook and Twitter.

Jennifer Kaylor can be reached at jenniferkaylor@ocn.me.

Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District, Oct. 25

2017 budget amended; 2018 budget hearing coming in November

By Lisa Hatfield

At the Oct. 25 Tri-Lakes Monument Fire Protection District (TLMFPD) board meeting, the directors approved an amended 2017 budget, viewed new versions of both the 2018 proposed budgets, and voted to un-freeze the chief's and deputy chief's salaries. They also heard updates on the current hiring process.

Vice President Roger Lance ran the meeting in the absence of President Jake Shirk. Secretary Mike Smaldino and Director Terri Hayes were also excused.

2017 amended budget approved

Fire Chief Chris Truty explained the purpose of the amended budget was to adjust the current budget based on significant unanticipated events or organizational changes that occurred after the normal budgeting process last fall. In 2017, these have included the short staffing situation, the impact fee arrangement with builders, and a move to different administrative offices. The budget is still balanced as required by law.

No members of the public spoke during the public hearing, and the directors then voted unanimously to approve the 2017 amended budget, which can be viewed in its entirety at <http://tlmfire.org/budget>.

2018 proposed budgets reviewed

Truty presented new versions of both 2018 proposed budgets, which included changes made based on the directors' comments from the September meeting.

Two versions of the budget have been prepared. If the proposed 6.9 mill levy increase from 11.5 to 18.4 mills is approved, revenue is estimated at \$9 million and total fund expenses esti-

mated \$8.8 million. If the mill levy stays at 11.5 mills in 2018, projected revenue would be about \$6.3 million, and total fund expenses would be about \$6.2 million. See <http://tlmfire.org/>.

Over the last several years, Truty has consistently explained the need to increase wages in TLMFPD to prevent loss of experienced staff to higher-paying districts. To see many more details and proposed dollar figures for the operating fund, capital improvement fund, impact fees fund, emergency reserve fund, and the vehicle replacement fund, and to see how both proposed budgets compare to the 2017 budget and what other changes Truty has suggested, see <http://tlmfire.org/mill-levy>, www.ocn.me/v17n10.htm#tlmfpd, www.ocn.me/v17n8.htm#tlmfpd, and www.ocn.me/v14n9.htm#tlmfpd-0827.

At the Nov. 15 meeting, the public hearing on the 2018 budget will be held. By then, the district will know if the ballot measure was approved by voters or not.

Chiefs' compensation restored to normal

Director Jason Buckingham made a motion that the chief and deputy chief's salaries, which had been frozen at the end of 2016, be restored to meet the new compensation formula that all other ranks have been using since the beginning of 2017. See www.ocn.me/v17n1.htm#tlmfpd.

Treasurer John Hildebrandt said he felt this was appropriate, and Buckingham said Shirk had agreed with the idea when he discussed it with him earlier. The motion was approved unanimously.

Financial report

Hildebrandt presented the monthly financial report as of Sept. 30. He said

overtime pay was noticeably over budget due to the staffing shortage, but overall wages were 3.5 percent under budget, and overall expenses as of the end of September were 2.4 percent below budget.

Hiring process and promotions

Truty said 37 people sat for recent initial written exams, and 23 passed. Also, 13 people took the EMS/paramedic exam, and nine passed. Several more stages of testing will follow in a long process, and by the end of November, candidates will be identified to be hired and sent to the West Metro firefighter academy that starts in January.

Truty said TLMFPD is hoping to hire three new people to get full-time staffing to 15 per shift, and hire four others to fill four existing vacancies that are currently being staffed by overtime, for a total of seven new hires.

Later, Lance asked if there had been policy changes that staff was not aware of regarding eligibility to apply for promotion to lieutenant. Truty said it had been announced in February that applicants would need to have their Fire Officer 1 certification in hand in order to apply, and right now there were only one or two eligible staff members who might apply for the two open lieutenant positions.

New radios on the way

Fire Marshal/Administrative Battalion Chief Jamey Bumgarner said that replacing obsolete, front-line communications equipment was well under way after TLMFPD received \$365,798 in Federal Emergency Management Agency grant money to replace outdated, unrepairable radios with Motorolas that have a lot more capabilities.

Other topics discussed briefly included:

- The International Association of

Firefighters (IAFF) union gave away close to 500 pumpkins at Tractor Supply on Oct. 21 and answered residents' question about the TLMFPD mill levy increase ballot issue. See related photo on page 26.

- It is vital to keep using social media, including Twitter and Nextdoor, to inform residents about local situations such as controlled burns in our area.
- The Monument Police Department and TLMFPD are working on an intergovernmental agreement about use and maintenance of snowmobiles that were donated to both agencies.
- TLMFPD crews presented fire prevention education to over 1,200 kindergarten, first- and second-graders in October.
- Truty said he had been interviewed by the Gazette recently as one of three local fire districts with ballot issues being decided this fall.

The Oct. 25 meeting agenda included a summary of call volume statistics comparing the number of runs in 2016 with 2017. The chart said that by September 2016, there had been 1,854 total runs, and by September 2017, there have been 1,791 total runs. The directors did not discuss these data totals. However, Bumgarner explained some details about the reduced number of automatic aid calls by Wescott FPD into TLMFPD since switching the response criteria to only life-threatening calls.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

Starting Nov. 1, the new leased location for the TLMFPD administrative offices will be 16055 Old Forest Point, Suite 103, in Monument.

Meetings are usually held the